

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, paragraph 2 of the Office Action refers to a “Martinoli” reference, which is not of record. Accordingly, Applicant’s representative telephoned Examiner Bellinger, and he confirmed that “Martinoli” refers to United States Patent No. 3,799,618. Thus, Applicant respectfully request that the Examiner make this reference of record on a Notice of References Cited (Form PTO-892) in the next Paper sent to Applicant.

Claims 1 and 8-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 3,799,618 to Martinoli in view of United States Patent No. 5,250,220 to Atwell. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

In this rejection, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to have substituted the rib 22k of Figure 14 of Martinoli for rib 22 of Figure 4 of Martinoli, and then to have moved this rib from the outboard side to the inboard side based on teachings from the Atwell reference. Initially, Applicant respectfully submits that the Martinoli reference only discloses that rib 22k can be substituted for rib 22a of Figure 4, and not for rib 22 of Figure 4. More specifically, Figures 7-14 are all directed to different embodiments of inboard rib 21a of Figure 4 (and not of outboard rib 22). This is the case because each of Figures 7-14 shows a variation of the inboard rib in the same environment as Figure 6 (such as inner perimeter 20), where Figure 6 is an enlarged view of the circled portion of Figure 4. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the Martinoli reference fails to disclose or suggest substituting a rib, such rib 22k as shown in Martinoli’s Figure 14, for a rib, such as rib 22 of

Martinoli's Figure 4. Thus, for at least this reason, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection.

Further, Applicant also respectfully submits that the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a wheel with a single ring-like element, where the single ring-like element is disposed on the inboard side of the wheel, as recited in independent Claims 1 and 12. Even assuming *arguendo* that the Martinoli reference discloses the use of only a single circumferential rib (rib 22 of Figure 4), such as by stating that a second rib (22A) "may" be added (col. 3, lines 46-49), this single rib 22 is on the outboard side, and not the inboard side as defined in Claims 1 and 12. Thus, this reference fails to disclose a single rib in the proper place.

In order to provide the motivation to move the rib to the inboard side, the Examiner relied upon the Atwell reference. However, Applicant respectfully submits that the Atwell reference additionally teaches that two mounting flanges (ribs) must be used in order to obtain proper balancing. *See* Atwell, col. 2, lines 63-66. Thus, even assuming *arguendo* that one of ordinary skill in the art would have moved rib 22 of Martinoli to the inboard side in light of Atwell, they would have also followed the other teaching of Atwell related to ribs, which is that two ribs must be included. Accordingly, the proposed combination would include two ribs, which does not satisfy the "single" ring-like element defined in independent Claims 1 and 12. Thus, for this reason also, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection.

Additionally, Applicant also respectfully submits that there is no disclosure or suggestion that the rib 22 of Martinoli includes the claimed features related to the details of the cross-sectional area of the ring-like element. In the Office Action (in the sentence bridging pages 2 and 3), the Examiner asserted that it would have been obvious to make the rib of Martinoli of the claimed cross-section to have “a thickness sufficient to prevent the weight 22 from being dislodged during operation, and to serve as a reinforcing rib to distribute forces imparted on the rim.” However, for securely seating the weight, the cross-section of the rib only needs to include a width of appropriate thickness with respect to the opening width of the weight, which has nothing to do with the claimed cross-section. Additionally, there is no disclosure or suggestion in the Martinoli reference that rib 22 is used for distributing forces, so there is no motivation to optimize for this parameter. In further support of this argument, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to recite that the single ring-like element is “solid” and that it “increases the natural frequency of the wheel such that the natural frequency of the wheel is in a higher frequency band than a frequency band of a pneumatic tire mounted thereon.” Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed cross-section was arrived at for increasing the natural frequency of the wheel such that the natural frequency of the wheel is in a higher frequency band than a frequency band of a pneumatic tire mounted thereon. Accordingly, as this goal has not been disclosed or suggested in the cited references, the cited references provide no reason to optimize parameters, such as the cross-section of the ring-like element, to achieve this unstated goal.

Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claims 1 and 12 and associated dependent Claims 8-11 and 13.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Atwell. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Atwell reference fails to disclose or suggest all of the claimed features of Claim 12. More specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that the Atwell reference fails to disclose or suggest a wheel in which, *inter alia*,

More specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that the Atwell reference does not disclose or suggest a wheel that includes, *inter alia*, an “inboard annular rim flange [that] includes a radially-extending inboard facing surface that is continuously and completely co-planar with a radially-extending inboard facing surface that extends along the entire radial length of the ring-like element,” as now defined in independent Claim 12.

Applicant’s Figure 1 shows one example of an embodiment with a radially-extending inboard annular rim flange [22B] including a radially-extending inboard facing surface [22B1] that is continuously and completely co-planar with a radially-extending inboard facing surface [26a] that extends along the entire radial length of the ring-like element [26].

In contrast, as can be seen in Figure 4 of the Atwell reference, assuming *arguendo* that the radially inner portion of circular flange 20 is considered as the claimed “ring-like element,” it can be seen that the radially-extending right-hand surface of this

element is not continuously and completely co-planar with the right-hand surface of the portion of the flange that is radially outside of flange 20. In the alternative, assuming *arguendo* that circular flange 18 is considered as the claimed "ring-like element," it can also be seen that flange 18 also lacks a radially-extending right-hand surface that is continuously and completely co-planar with a radially-extending right-hand surface of an element that can be considered as equivalent to the claimed annular rim flange. Thus, because all of the claimed features are not disclosed or suggested in the cited reference, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 12.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

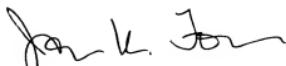
If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge fees which may be required to this application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,
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